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S W E D E N

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SVENSKA SKIFFEROLJEAKTIEBOLAGET, ÖREBRO

A process in the gasification of oil-bearing shale rock in situ while supplying heat through channels bored in the shale rock.

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The invention refers to a process of producing shale oil, based on the heating of the shale rock without prior quarrying of the shale, in which process the oil-bearing gases produced by the heating are removed from the rock through channels bored in it. During condensation through cooling, those portions of the gases that constitute the shale oil are then separated from said gases.

When heating a shale rock and during degasification of gas-forming substances that are present in the rock a certain quantity of material is transported away, which material in a gaseous state thus leaves the rock in a manner similar to that occurring in degasification of pit coal or wood, for example, and in all such cases a more or less porous structure of the original material remains. The remaining material, provided it consists of coke or charcoal, has because of its porous structure extraordinarily large surface area within reach of the gas. It is now known that the shale coke also, that is in this case the degasified shale rock, has a porous structure with very large surface area within reach of gases. The shale coke unlike ordinary coke or

charcoal has at the same time a very high ash content, that is a residue of incombustible components, and with regard to Swedish conditions this amounts to about 70% of the original weight of the shale. The shale-coke contents include various iron compounds, for example, and quite a few other components that in contact with different gases are suited as catalysts for influencing reactions in the gases.

In direct degasification of shale rock during continuing production of shale oil very large volumes of heated and degasified shale rock are created, mainly consisting of shale coke which remains unmoved in its various strata but which through the degasification has become transformed into one large porous mass that allows gases to move in all directions. If thus approximately 15 m^3 of rock mass is used for each m^3 of oil, then, for example, a porous shale rock of $300,000 \text{ m}^3$ is formed during one year in the production of $20,000 \text{ m}^3$ of shale oil. During the actual gasification procedure of the shale oil a slowly progressing heat front is arranged in the shale rock where both instruments for heating (electric heating elements) and outlet channels for removal of the gases are gradually put into action.

The object of the invention is to use the large porous shale-coke mass formed in this manner as a catalyst for initiation of certain desired chemical reactions within the same, all with the intent of producing various substances with the co-operation of the catalyst in question. The gas channels mentioned are utilized in this process, after they have finished serving as outlets for the shale-oil gases, also for supply of gases to the shale rock. At the same time other such channels can be used as outlets for the synthesis products that have been produced within the shale rock with the co-operation of the shale coke catalyst. A portion of the channels thus forms inlets to the shale coke, and other channels serve as outlets from the same, at which gases that are inserted into the rock under pressure in one place can be led away from the same in another place. Gases then come into contact with the surfaces of the

catalyst and are affected by these in a manner determined by the chemical and physical conditions at hand.

The invention will be more thoroughly described below with reference to the design for implementation of the process shown in the example on the enclosed drawing, at which time other qualities characteristic of the invention also will be indicated.


Figure 1 shows more or less schematically a shale rock, arranged for production of shale oil, in vertical section.

Figure 2 shows a diagram indicating the temperature distribution within the shale rock.

10 on the drawing indicates a number of heating elements that are installed at regular intervals in the shale rock 12, on which is overlaid a stratum of limestone 14 and possibly a layer of soil 16. A number of exhaust channels 18 are connected to gas outlets 20, drilled through limestone and shale. The heating elements 10 and the exhaust channels 18 are synchronously arranged in rows one after another at an angle with the plane of the drawing. The gas outlets 20 belonging to such a row are connected to a manifold 24 via the connecting pipes 21 and shut-off and control valves, respectively, 22 , 23. A larger manifold 25 for a number of manifolds 24 unites these in turn with a condenser 26 and a spray tower 27 in which the shale-oil gases are cooled in a standard manner and separated from condensable oil components to the greatest possible extent. The condenser 26 which can also consist of or include, respectively, equipment for other chemical treatment of shale-oil gases, for example, separation of sulfur or other by-products in these, includes a pipe 28 connected to a storage tank for the oil 30. A pipe 32 from the tower washer 27 also leads to this tank. From a branch pipe 34 some of the uncondensed gases can also be led off through a pipe 36 into which is installed a valve 38, to be used for fuel or other purposes. Another portion of the gases flows through a compressor 40.

In a section of the shale rock, bordered at a right angle to the plane of the drawing by the plane through the lines 42, 44, the pyrolysis, that is the new formation of shale gases occurring through heat supply, is considered to be finished. The heat supply to the elements 10 has consequently been interrupted here. For the moment, a section of the shale rock, bordered by the lines 44-46, is extracted instead. The heat wave is accordingly assumed to move in the direction of the arrows 48. The line 50 in Figure 2 represents the temperature distribution in the two sections. At line 44 the temperature can reach a value between 350 and 400°C, preferably 380°C. During the process according to the invention the temperature falls in the direction towards line 42.

While the channels 20 in section 44-46 serve as outlets for the shale gases extracted in this section, at least one row of such channels, that is situated at the rear edge of the section 42-44, as seen in the direction of the path of the heat according to the arrows 48, and which has been given the designation 52 on the drawing, has been connected to the back-pressure side of the compressor via a manifold 54. In the gas channels 52 the gases coming from the pipe 34 are thus forced to flow back to the already degasified shale rock in the area between the lines 42 and 44. Some of these gases flowing back can be led off through an outlet 56 and a manifold 58 from the outlet channel 60 in this area, in order to be utilized or recycled, respectively, to the pipe 34 after suitable treatment by condensation or washing or other processes. Possibly, the channels 60 can be connected to the junction pipe 24. During continued flow within the porous strata of the shale rock in the direction of the arrows 48 the rest of the gases can contact shale rock within the sections 44-46 where shale rock heating is in progress and where during the pyrolysis shale gases are consequently led off through the gas channels 20. By obtaining a sufficiently high pressure increase in the gases after the compressor 40 these can thus be made to flow in a circuit with two different branches, partly a circuit connected to the passages 56, 34 and the section 42-44 in the shale rock, partly a circuit including passages 18, 34 and both



sections 42-44 and 44-46 within the shale rock. According to the invention, such gases which through cooling, condensation and washing are freed from the oil are thus made to flow through the shale rock where they among other things can contribute to more expeditions transport of oil gases from the shale rock to the condenser installation by the flushing effect that such gases will produce. However, besides this flushing effect another effect is also referred to according to the invention. In all oil production with degasification directly in the shale rock some losses always arise through gas leakage within the rock up towards the ground surface, because of the overpressure that prevails in the rock during degasification. Cracks exist here and there in the rock, and the overlaid limestone is in itself not completely leak-free. A smaller portion of the produced oil gases will therefore gradually leak out through leakage in cracks in the ground on top of the shale rock. Already desgasified shale rock is filled by a compressor with gases where the oil has already been extracted according to the invention. The leakage that still results in connection therewith will in this way consist of leaking gases that do not contain any oil. Owing to this the advantage is gained according to the invention that oil losses through leakage in the ground surface are reduced.

When extracting oil from shale it can be assumed that depending on the temperatures and pressures at which the pyrolysis takes place, as well as depending on the rate at which the shale is heated, the pyrolysis is carried out under conditions regulated by physical and chemical conditions, so that different substances are formed in a quantitatively balanced ratio to one another. As an example it can thus be assumed that 20% of the formed pyrolysis gas consists of hydrogen, a certain portion of said gas of methane and other closely related hydrocarbons, and that finally the oil-forming hydrocarbons will amount to a smaller portion of the total gas volume because of their higher molecular weight.

The actual pyrolysis process is of such a complicated nature that at present it cannot be explained in a satisfactory way, but the practical result indicates that a certain ratio between the different hydrocarbons always is present. As can be seen from above, the gas returned through pipe 34 to the shale rock is proportionately richer in hydrogen and light hydrocarbons than the original pyrolysis gas from which the heavier hydrocarbons have been extracted. In the presence of the large porous mass of shale rock as a contact substance and where pyrolysis progresses slowly within very large volumes, the surplus of hydrogen and lighter hydrocarbons in the recycled gas will according to the invention affect the pyrolysis in the direction that an equilibrium strives to be reinstated similar to the composition of the pyrolysis gas originally extracted. This condition could probably most closely be compared to hydrogenation, but, according to the invention, the very high pressure under which such a hydrogenation is normally carried out are replaced, in this case with an enormous contact surface area in the catalyst, which makes it possible to achieve an approach to equilibrium ratio between the different reactions during pyrolysis in a reasonable time. More coal is then bound to the hydrogen added through the reintroduction, through which the carbon remaining in the coke is diminished to the advantage of a quantitative increase in the oil-forming gases.

According to the invention the gases from which the oil has been extracted first pass through a porous rock mass where the oil has already been driven off. In this process the said gases are preheated, after they during the passage through the condenser and spray tower have been cooled to a low temperature that in practice remains about 0° or lower. The already degasified shale rock and the waste heat that has been left behind in this hot rock after the pyrolysis are thus partly utilized for preheating the circulation gas participating in the pyrolysis. Since the heat content of such a gas is relatively low, the quantity of gas that is circulated can according to the invention and depending on the circumstances be selected so that its volume amounts to one or several times the volume of the gas newly formed in the pyrolysis. In this way the mechanism of reaction which

has been indicated above is facilitated in such a manner that equilibrium in the different reactions does not have to be nearly achieved because of the large surplus of lighter hydrocarbons and hydrogen, that is available in the pyrolysis. Through this richer gas circulation the condition also emerges that such hydrocarbons that are in the border area for the gasification more easily can be led away from the shale rock by means of the richer gas circulation. The heaviest hydrocarbons that without circulating gas remain and are coked in the rock, will probably therefore wholly or partially be forced to move along with the general gas flow by means of gas circulation. According to the invention new possibilities are thus created by introduction of a circulating gas in already heated shale rock to obtain a richer production of the coveted pyrolytic liquid hydrocarbons. Finally it is conceivable that the large rock body of hot shale coke through which the circulation gas flows on its way to the pyrolysis area in the shale rock because of its enormous dimensions and with that associated catalytic activity to a certain extent directly allows a hydrogenation of hydrocarbons closely related to the coke, that have remained in the same, through which the loss of residue in the form of coke is reduced.

Instead of the pyrolysis gases according to above other gases, for example producer gas, can be considered for accomplishment of different desired chemical reactions with assistance from the porous hot shale.

Fig. 1

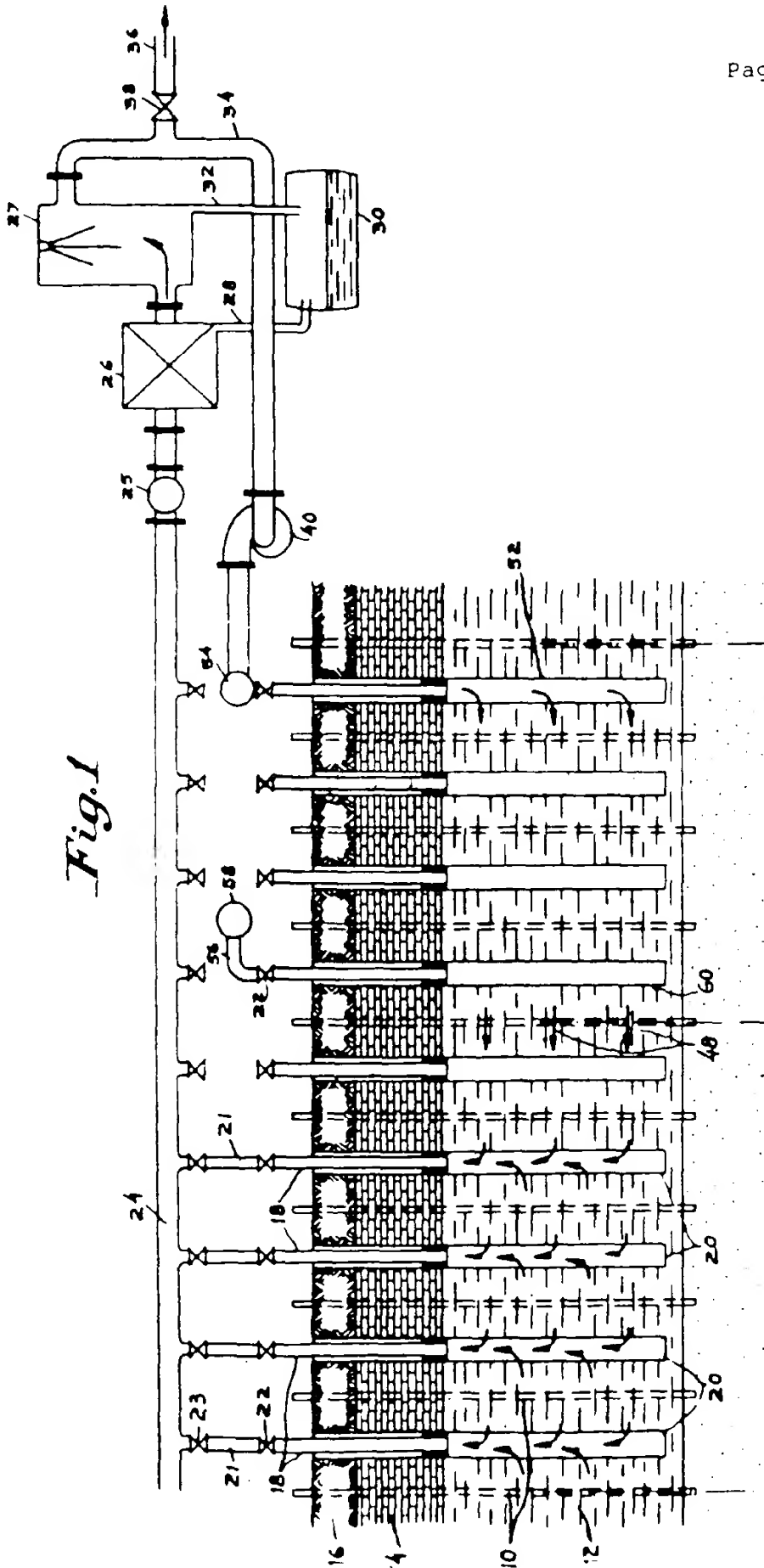
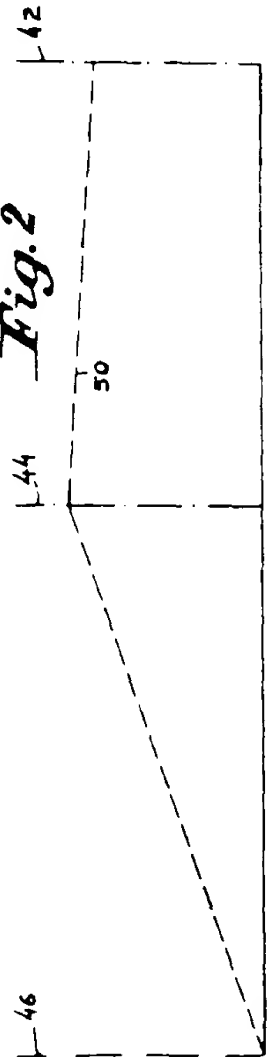


Fig. 2



Patent claims: [for clarification, retyped from original text.]

Translation of the claims of Swedish Patent Specification 123-138
Svenska Skifferoljeaktiebolaget, Örebro, Sweden.

1. A process in the gasification of oil-bearing shale rocks in situ while supplying heat through channels bored in the rock, characterized in that when a shale portion has been degasified by means of pyrolysis and has become porous gases are introduced in said portion, while it is still warm, through other channels bored in the shale rock than the heat supplying channels, and that said gases are of such kind that they in the meanwhile are subjected to chemical reactions without combustion, the shale rock acting as a catalyst.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that at least a part of the gas formed during the pyrolysis is recycled into the shale portion after that its oil-bearing constituents has [sic; have] been removed by condensation or washing with cooling.

3. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized by that the introduced gas by means of a compressor is caused to flow through a portion of already degasified warm shale rock to be introduced in another rock portion wherein oil is being recovered.

4. A process as claimed in any of the claims 1 to 3, characterized by that a part of the recycled gas is discharged from the shale rock before it has reached the zone, wherein the degasification of shale is taking place, while another part is passed also through this zone.

5. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized by that the gases are introduced into the shale rock through the channels serving as gas outlets during the pyrolysis.

lörade gasavlopp 20. Värmeelementen 10 och avgaskanalerna 18 äro samtidigt anordnade i rader eller varandra i vinkel med ritningsplanet. Gasavloppen 20 tillhörande en dylik rad äro över förbindelserne 21 och avstängnings- resp. regleringsventiler 22, 23 anslutna till en samlingskanal 24. En större samlingskanal 25 för ett flertal samlingskanaler 24 förenar dessa i sin tur med en kondensor 16 och ett tvättorn 27, vari skifferoljegaserne på kant sätt nedkylas och i möjligaste mån sefras från kondenserbara oljebeständsdelar. Kondensorn 26, vilken även kan utgöras av resp. omfatta apparatur för annan kemisk behandling av skifferoljegaser t. ex. avskiljning av svavel eller andra biprodukter i dessa, är genom en ledning 28 ansluten till en uppfinningsbehållare 30 för oljan. I denna behållare mynnar även en ledning 32 från tvättornet 27. Från en grenledning 34 kunna en del av de icke kondenserade gaserna avföras genom en ledning 36, i vilken är insatt en vent 38, för att användas som bränsle eller för andra ändamål. En annan del av gaserna genomströmmas en kompressoranordning 40.

I en sektion av skifferberget begränsad vindrätt mot ritningsplanet av plan genom linjerna 42, 44 antages pyrolysen, d. v. s. en under värmeförsel förstågande nybildning av oljefraser vara avslutad. Värmeförseln i elementen 10 har här alltså avbrutits. I allet utvinnes för ögonblicket en sektion av oljefraser, begränsad av linjerna 44-46, emnevägen förutsattes alltså vandra i riktningen av pilarna 48. Linjen 50 i fig. 2 representerar temperaturfördelningen i de båda sektionerna. Vid linjen 44 kan temperaturen vara uppmätt ett värde, mellan 350—400° C. retradessvis omkring 380° C. Temperaturen ökar genom processen enligt uppfinningen i riktning mot linjen 42.

Medan kanalerna 20 i sektionen 44-46 utgöra som avlopp för de i denna sektion vinna skiffergaserna, har minst en rad dylika kanaler, som är belägen vid sektionens östra bakkant, sett i varmevägens riktning mot pilarna 48, och som är riktningen givits teckningen 52, anslutits till kompressorns trycksida via en samlingskanal 54. I gasledningarna 52 bringas sålunda de från ledning 34 kommande gaserna att återströmma till redan avgasade skifferberget inom området mellan linjerna 42 och 44. En del av dessa återströmande gaser kunna avledas genom avlopp 56 och en samlingskanal 58 från kanalen 60 inom detta område, för att efter lämplig behandling genom kondensation, tvättning eller andra processer nyttiggöras resp. återledas till ledningen 34. Eventuellt äro kanalerna 60 vara hopkopplade med dragsledningen 24. Resten av gaserna kommer fortsatt strömning inom skifferberget i porösa lagringar i pilarna 48 riktning mot i kontakt med skifferberget inom sek-

tionen 44-46 där uppströmningen av skifferberget pågår och där alltså skiffergaserna under pyrolysen avledas genom avstängnings- resp. regleringsventiler 22, 23. Genom åstadkommandet av tillräckligt tryckstegring hos gaserna eller kompressorn 40 kunna dessa således bringas att strömma i ett kretslopp med två olika förgreningar, dels en krets ansluten till pilarna 50, 54 och sektionen 12-14 i skifferberget och dels en krets innefattande pilarna 58, 60 och de öfriga sektionerna 12-14 och 44-46 inom skifferberget. Sådana gaser vilka genom nedkylning, kondensation och tvättning beträffas av oljan bringas således enligt uppfinningen att genomströmma skifferberget, där de blifva kunna bidraga till en flyktigare transport av oljefraser från skifferberget till kondensorn i läggningen genom den spolverkan, som dylika gaser komma att prestera. Vid sidan av denna spolverkan avses emellertid enligt uppfinningen även en annan verkan. Vid all oljen i en ställning med avgasning direkt i skifferberget uppkommer alltid på grund av det övertvick som råder i berget vid avgasningen en del förluster genom gasläckage inom berget upp mot markytan. Sprickor finnas här och var inom berget och det överlagrade kalkberget är i sig självt icke fullkomligt tät. En mindre del av de framställda oljefraserna kommer därför att så småningom läcka ut genom läckage i sprickor i marken ovanpå skifferberget. Enligt uppfinningen tyfles redan avgasat skifferberg med tillhjälp av en kompressor med gaser där oljan redan utvunnits. Det läckage som därvid all fortforande uppstår kommer på så sätt att bestå av läckande gaser, som icke innehålla någon olja. Härigenom vinnas enligt uppfinningen den fördelen, att oljeförluster genom läckage i markytan minskas.

Vid oljeutvinning ur skiffer kan det antagas, att beroende på de temperaturer och tryck, varunder pyrolysen bedrags, även som beroende på den hastighet, med vilken uppströmningen av skiffern genomföres, pyrolysen genomföres under av de fysikaliska och kemiska betingelserna i regelade förhållanden, så att olika substanser utbildas i ett kvantitativt förhållande till varandra. Sålunda kan som exempel antagas, att 20 % av den utbildade pyrolysgasen utgöres av vatten, en viss del av densamma av mer eller mindre märkbare kolväten för att slutligen de oljefraser i kolvätena på grund av sin större molekylvikt komma att uppgå till en mindre del av den totala gasvolymen.

Sålunda pyrolysisprocessen är av en så komplicerad natur, att man vid den användande kan tilltredsställande klara sig om den del praktiska resultat tyder på, att en dylik viss proportion mellan de olika kolvätenen alltid föreligger. Den genom ledningen 34 till skifferberget återförda gaserna är såsom av ovanstående framgår, proportionvis rik på vatten och lättare kolväten, vilka utspärras

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pyrolysgasen. Härigenom de tyngre kol-
partiklarna utvinns. Härvid kan skifferbergets
stora porösa massa som i allmänhet består af
en pyrolys längs med på grund af att de
svagare kommer enligt uppfinnningen ver-
skaffet av välgas och lättare kolvaten och
aterinförda gasen att påverka pyrolysen i den
riktning att en balans strävar att återställa
med den ursprungligen utvinna pyrolysgasen
sammansättning. Detta förhållande torde nä-
rast kunna liknas vid en hydriering, ända om-
då uppfinnningen ersattes af mycket högt
tryck, under vilka sådan hydriering brukar ge-
nomböras, i detta fall med en olantil, kontakt-
yta i katalysatorn, som möjliggör att inom
ringlig tid uppnå ett närmående till ett balans-
erat förhållande mellan de olika reaktioner-
na vid pyrolysen. Därvid binder mera kol vid
det genom återinföringen tillförda väte, var-
igenom i koksen kvarblivande kol minskas
till förmån för en kvantitativ ökning av de
oljebildande gaserna.

Enligt uppfinnningen passerar de gaser, ut-
vinna utvunns först genom en porös
bergsmassa, där oljeavdrifning redan är till-
börlig. Härunder förvarmes sagda gaser, se-
dan de under passagen genom kondensor och
tvättning nedkylts till en lag temperatur, som
i praktiken faller sig omkring 0° eller lägre.
Det redan avgasade skifferberget och den
spilvarme som i detta värme berg kvantitativt
efter pyrolysen, utnyttjas såväl delvis
för förvarmning av den vid pyrolysen med-
verkande cirkulationsgasen. Emedan en sa-
dan gas värmeinnehåll är relativt lågt, kan
enligt uppfinnningen den kvantitet gas, som
cirkuleras beroende på omständigheterna val-
jas så, att dess volym uppgår till en eller flera
gångar den vid pyrolysen nybildade gasens vo-
lym. Härigenom underlättas det reaktionsför-
lopp, som här ovan antytts på så sätt att ett
balansförhållande inom de olika reaktioner-
na icke behöver närmelsevis uppnås på grund
av det stora överskott av lättare kolvaten och
vate, som vid pyrolysen finnas tillgängliga.
Genom denna rikligare gascirkulation inträ-
der även det förhållande, att sådana kolvate-
n, som ligga på gränsoffret för förgas-
ningen, lättare kunna avloras ur skifferber-
get med tillhjälp av den rikligare gascirkula-
tionen. De tyngsta kolvatena, som utan cirku-
lerande gas kvarbliva och forkokas i berget,
torde därför med tillhjälp av gascirkulation
helt eller delvis bringas att medfölja den all-
männa gasströmningen. Enligt uppfinnningen
skapas således genom införande av en cirku-
lerande gas inom redan uppvärmt skiffer-

berg av en plömb eller en i kolsyra och vatten
med bestående genom pyrolysen och återbildade
flytande kolvaten. Strömningen i den tankas,
där gaserna och gaserna avlägsnas från kolska-
len, som vilken cirkulationsgasen strömmar på
sin väg till pyrolysen och i skifferberget, på-
verkar av den cirkulerande värmeströmmen och där-
med förknippad kolavlägsningen direkt i
viss mån med en hydriering av med kolska-
nen bestående kolvaten, som vätskan i den
som i vägen genom testbänken i form av
föreskrifningar.

I stället för pyrolysgaserna enligt ovan kun-
na andra gaser, t. ex. generatörgas, komma i
fråga för astadkommandet av olika önskade
kemiska reaktioner under medverkan av den
porösa värme skiffern.

Patentanspråk.

1. Sätt vid förgasning av oljeförande skif-
terberg in situ under tillförande av värme ge-
nom i skifferberget upptagna kanaler, kän-
netecknat därav, att sedan ett skifferparti ge-
nom pyrolys avgasats och blivit poröst, gaser
införas i detta parti, medan det annat
varmt, genom andra i skifferberget upptag-
na kanaler, är värmetillsattningskanalerna och
att dessa gaser äro av sådan art, att de här-
under utsättas för kemiska reaktioner utan för-
bränning med skifferberget tjänstgörande som
katalysator.

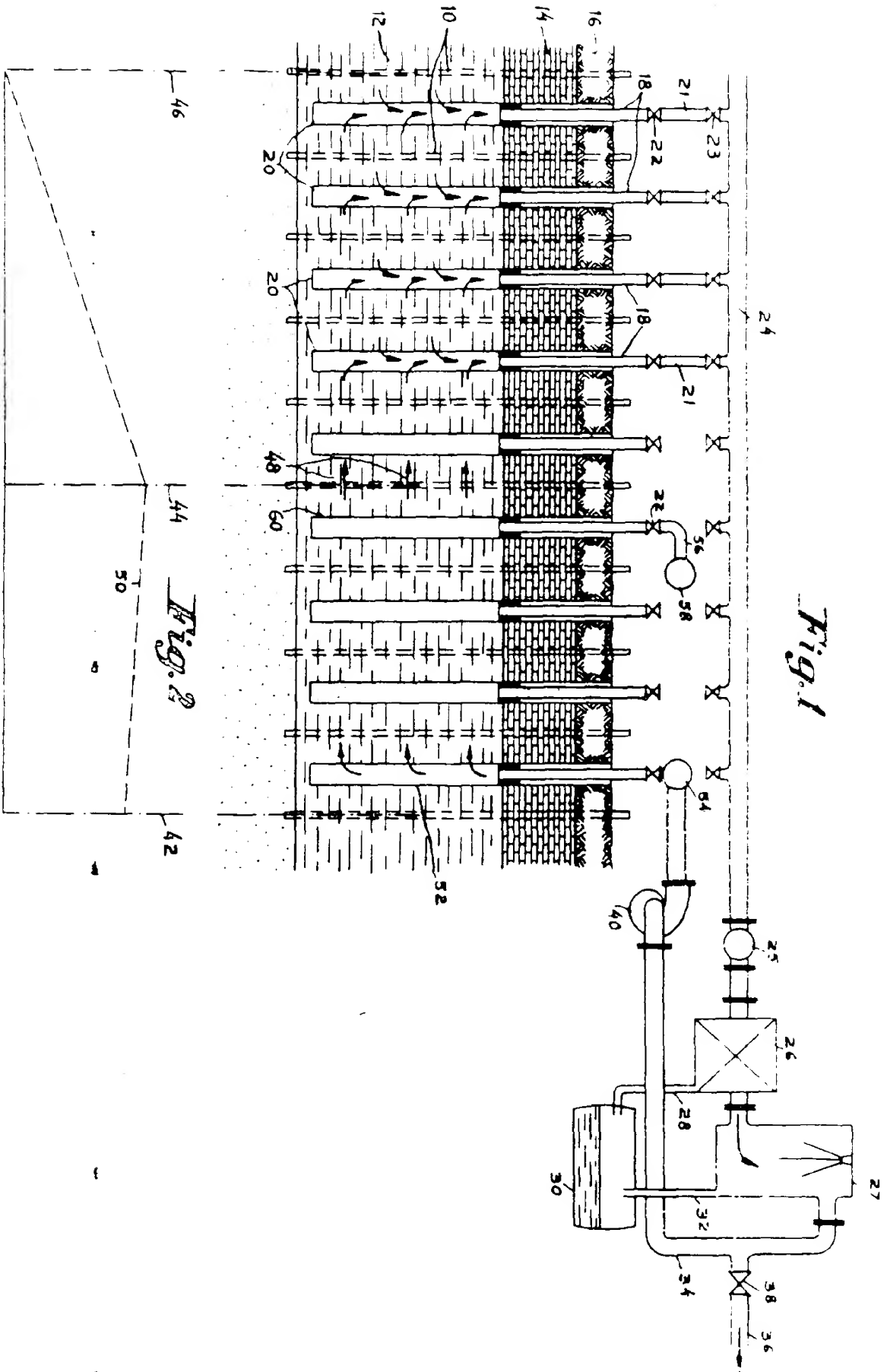
2. Sätt enligt patentanspråket 1, känneteck-
nat därav, att i skifferpartiet återinföras åt-
minstone en del av den under pyrolysen bil-
dade gasen, sedan den genom kondensation
eller tvättning under avkyllning berövas sina
oljeförande beståndsdelar.

3. Sätt enligt patentanspråket 1, känneteck-
nat därav, att den införda gasen genom en
kompressoranordning bringas att strömma ge-
nom ett parti av redan avgasat varmt skiffer-
berg för att därifrån införas i annat bergpar-
ti, där oljeutvinning pågår.

4. Sätt enligt patentanspråken 1-3, kän-
netecknat därav, att en del av den återinför-
da gasen utläges från skifferberget inom den
när den zon, i vilken avgasning av skiffer på-
går, medan en annan del får passera även den
zon.

5. Sätt enligt något av de föregående pa-
tentanspråken, kännetecknat därav, att gas-
erna införas i skifferberget genom kanaler,
som under pyrolysen tjänstgjorde som gas-
avlopp.

Fig. 1



Translation of the claims of Swedish Patent Specification 123.138
Svenska Skifferoljeaktiebolaget, Malmö, Sweden.

1. A process in the gasification of oil-bearing shale rocks in situ while supplying heat through channels bored in the rock, characterized in that when a shale portion has been degasified by means of pyrolysis and has become porous gases are introduced in said portion, while it is still warm, through other channels bored in the shale rock than the heat supplying channels, and that said gases are of such kind that they in the meanwhile are subjected to chemical reactions without combustion, the shale rock acting as a catalyst.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that at least a part of the gas formed during the pyrolysis is recycled into the shale portion after that its oil-bearing constituents have been removed by condensation or washing with cooling.

3. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized by that the introduced gas by means of a compressor is caused to flow through a portion of already degasified warm shale rock to be introduced in another rock portion wherein oil is being recovered.

4. A process as claimed in any of the claims 1 to 3, characterized by that a part of the recycled gas is discharged from the shale rock before it has reached the zone, wherein the degasification of shale is taking place, while another part is passed also through this zone.

5. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, characterized by that the gases are introduced into the shale rock through the channels serving as gas outlets during the pyrolysis.